

Appn No. 10/586,081
Amdt date February 1, 2010
Reply to Office action of December 4, 2009

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-6 and 10-22 are pending and are subject to the Examiner's restriction requirement. Applicant provisionally elects the claims of Group II (claims 2 and 3) with traverse. Applicant respectfully submits that the restriction requirement is improper, as the claims are connected in at least one of design, operation, or effect and, equally important, no substantial burden would be imposed upon the Examiner if he were to examine all of the claims at this time. Applicant does not concede that any prior art found to be relevant with respect to one group of claims is also relevant to any of the other groups of claims but, rather, submits that a sufficient relationship exists that examination of all the claims can proceed at this time.

This is particularly easy to see with respect to Groups II (2-3) and V (claims 19-20). Claims 2 and 3 are directed to a method for the manufacture of a three-dimensional object, the method comprising a number of steps. Claims 19-20 are directed to an object made of particles that are connected to each other, characterized in that the object was manufactured by means of the method recited in claim 2 (see claim 19) or claim 3 (see claim 20). Claims 19 and 20 are evidently written in product-by-process format, with the processes being recited in claims 2 and 3, respectively. Thus, any search by the Examiner for claims to the method would also uncover art directed to the product, and vice versa.

It is also easy to see the relationship between Groups I and II. Group I (claim 1) is directed to the use of particles containing at least one cavity in a method for manufacturing a three-dimensional object in a layer-wise fashion, while Group II (claims 2 and 3) are directed to a method of manufacturing a three-dimensional object, with steps such as "applying a layer of particles onto a target surface" to build up the particles in layers, and wherein the particles that are used contain at least one cavity. The Examiner would undoubtedly find the same art when he searches Groups I and II.

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Group III is drawn to a multiple-phase material system for use in a 3D printing process, in other words, a layer-wise process for building an object. Like the other groups, it recites the use of particles containing at least one cavity.

Accordingly, Applicant urges the Examiner to withdraw the restriction requirement and examine all claims at this time. At a minimum, Applicant submits that at least the claims of both Groups II and V should be searched, given the relationship between the recited process claims (Group II) and the product-by-process claims (Group V).

Respectfully submitted,
CHRISTIE, PARKER & HALE, LLP

By


John D. Carpenter
Reg. No. 34,133
626/795-9900

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